

EMOTIONAL CREATIVITY AS A FACTOR OF INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

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Abstract

The article describes the results of a comprehensive psychological study that identified the relationship between emotional creativity with such indicators of individual psychological wellbeing as hardiness and subjective quality of life, and the role of emotional creativity of parents in formation of emotional and psychological wellbeing of teenagers in family. Also, the interrelations between mothers' emotional creativity and sons' assertiveness and daughters' self-attitude were found. The authors came to the conclusion that emotional creativity can be as one of the increase mechanisms of hardiness in difficult non-standard life situations that are beyond the scope of general life experience and also can be as a factor of individual and family psychological wellbeing of adults and children in family.

Key words: emotional creativity, individual hardiness, subjective quality of life, assertiveness, self-esteem, child-parent relationship.

Introduction

A modern people's life is characterized by rapid changes that affect on all the sides of their existence, and sometimes, it is not protected from personal, social and cultural traumas, industrial and natural disasters. Extra hardiness and resources that help to find new ways of responding in the situations of increased uncertainty are

demanded from a person in increased risks conditions. One of such resources of person's adaptation in changing life conditions is personal and emotional creativity.

Emotional creativity is generally defined as generation of new ideas regarding emotional phenomena [1; 2]. The notion of emotional creativity was first suggested by American psychologist J.R. Averill as a part of developed by him socio-constructivist theory that considers emotions as complex constructs or *emotional syndromes*, that include socially caused instructions to experience, expression and comprehension of emotions [3].

According to the view of J.R. Averill, any emotion is a syndrome – a complex pattern of reactions, represented by such components as physiological arousal, expression, subjective experiences [3]. Holistic emotional syndromes are not genetically programmed, but organized according to social norms.

Conducting theoretical and empirical analysis, J.R. Averill [4] identified such structural components of *emotional creativity as* preparedness – the knowledge about emotions on the basis of previous experience and meaning attached to emotional life; novelty – the ability to experience unusual, difficult to describe emotions; effectiveness/authenticity of emotional syndromes – the ability to generate emotions that have definite social value and reflects the unique individuality of their creator.

In varying degrees people have the ability to modify and improve emotional syndromes due to their own creative activity. The most emotionally creative people can create new forms of emotions on their own, modifying notions and norms on which these emotions are based; they have the depth of knowledge of their own and other's emotional experience; they are prone to the meaningful analysis of feelings. The behavior of such people is more flexible.

The modern problem field of emotional creativity is quite heuristic and attracts attention of an increasing range of researchers, the problems of studying the nature and development of emotional creativity are solved within it [4], correspondence between emotional creativity and emotional intellect [5; 6], the role of emotional

creativity for the development of self-efficacy and development of educational motivation [6].

Emotional creativity in the age of the triumph of rationality and pragmatism and suppression of the world of human emotions can be one of the little actualized, but very important resources of psychological wellbeing, hardiness and effective interpersonal relationships.

In our view, emotional creativity can provide response flexibility in subjectively and objectively difficult stress situations, and contribute to the transformation of one, familiar and stereotypical arising emotions into others, that serve for the search of meanings of emerging life events.

Emotional creativity developed throughout the life can contribute to the increase of hardiness experience, whose psychological mechanisms are closely tied with emotional regulation and besides, it is primarily relevant for adaptation in unexpected, non-standard situations that sometimes require the production of new non-stereotyped forms of emotional reacting.

The notion of “hardiness” was suggested by S.C. Kobasa, S.R. Maddi, M.C. Puccetti for describing abilities to evaluate events less traumatically and to cope with stress successfully [7]. The problem of hardiness is located at the overlap of theoretical views of existential psychology and applied field of psychology of stress and self-regulation.

Hardiness, according to the theory of S.R. Maddi, is a special belief system of a person about himself/herself, the world and relationship with it in connection with the difficulties of life, that consists of 3 components: involvement, control, risk taking [see: 8, p. 4-5]. The conviction that involvement in what is happening gives maximum possibilities of gaining important experience and pleasure of his/her own activities, mental control over events and also preparedness to act in the absence of reliable guarantees of success help to confront the difficulties of life [7]. Hardiness is woven into the system of person relations represented by cognitive, behavioural and emotional spheres.

The role of individual's emotional creativity in determination of interpersonal relationships and mental conditions and characteristics of other people is yet unstudied area and it requires serious research.

As emotional creativity, according to the studies of J.R. Averill, may be the ability developed due to the acquired experience [4], that is often connected with the interaction with other people, we raised the question of possible participation of individual emotional creativity in the formation of psychological peculiarities of relatives, in particular, of the role of emotional creativity of mothers in the development of personal qualities of teenagers, that helps to the formation of their emotional and psychological wellbeing.

The research experience of influence of parents' personal qualities and child-parent relationship on the development of personal and emotional and behavioural peculiarities of children is quite extensive [9; 10; 11]. In the teen age the problems of psychological emancipation from parents, formation of personal independence, preparedness to defend their opinions and rights, and also the problems of self-comprehension, self-attitude, and self-esteem are experienced particularly acute. One of the factors of successful resolution of such age problems is relationship with parents and stable characterological features of close adults.

The purpose of our comprehensive study that consisted of two stages was to study relationship of emotional creativity of an adult individual with such significant indicators of an individual psychological wellbeing as hardiness and subjective quality of life, and to identify the role of mothers' emotional creativity in development of such indicators of family psychological wellbeing of teenagers in family as assertiveness and self-attitude.

Methods

As methods of research we used the questionnaire of emotional creativity by J.R. Averill [see: 12], the hardiness test by S.R. Maddi (adaptation by D.A. Leontev,

E.I. Rasskazova) [8], test for determining subjective quality of life by A.A. Zaichenko [13, p. 259-274], test-questionnaire “Determination of assertiveness” by M.F. Aleksandrov, O.E. Bulanova, M.S. Prudina [14], method “Self-identity of a person” by B.A. Sosnovskij, I.O. Motkov [15, p. 87-91]. The study involved 200 people, including 50 child-parent pairs: mothers and teenagers. As a method of statistical and mathematical data processing we used the method of correlation analysis.

Analysis and discussion of results

The first stage of the research.

According to the conducted correlation analysis of components of emotional creativity and hardiness we obtained the following results (see table 1).

Table 1. Correlation of components of hardiness and emotional creativity

	Novelty	Preparedness	Authenticity	Effectiveness	Total emotional creativity
Total hardiness	0,043221	0,3251*	0,263847	0,590572***	0,307611*
Involvement	-0,08793	0,209672	0,209786	0,51756***	0,160623
Control	0,157887	0,349714*	0,250401	0,540676***	0,374856*
Risk	0,066896	0,331104*	0,253818	0,518828***	0,309241*

Note: *** - $p \leq 0,001$; ** - $p \leq 0,01$; * - $p \leq 0,05$

The total index of the hardiness scale positively correlates with the total index of the emotional creativity scale, that indicates ability to generate (different from normative) effective (that have definite individual and group value) and authentic (that reflect personality of a creator) emotional syndromes, in other words, the ability

to express new and sincere emotional reactions ($p \leq 0,05$). This may indicate that a person, who approaches to the decision of life problems and challenges emotionally and creatively, easily copes with internal stress in stressful situations.

We have also received the correlation between the number of components of emotional creativity and hardiness (see: Table 1, figure 1)

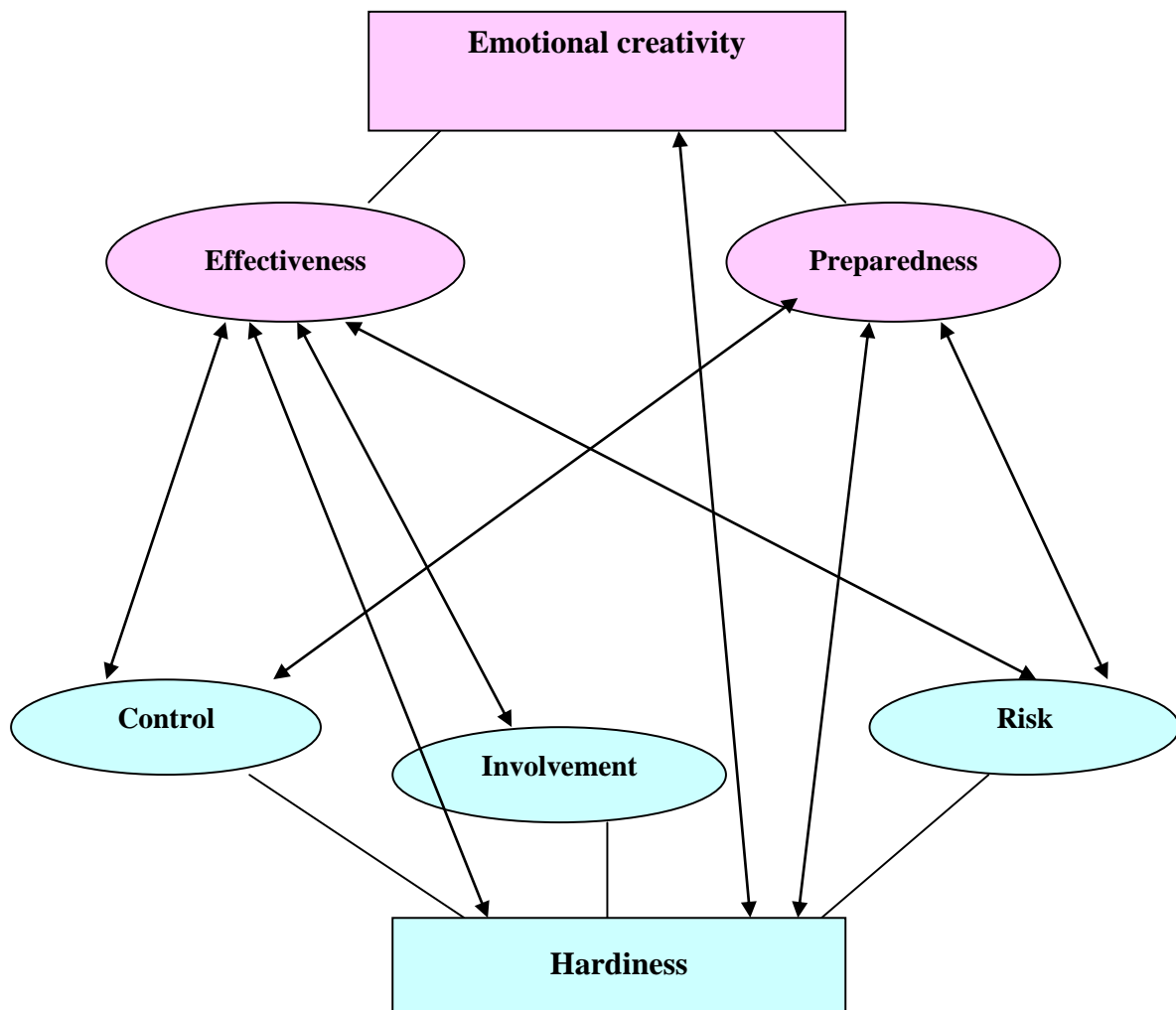


Figure1. Correlation of components of emotional creativity and hardiness

The scale “effectiveness” of emotional creativity positively correlates with the total hardiness index ($p \leq 0,05$), and also with its scales: “involvement” ($p \leq 0,001$), “control” ($p \leq 0,001$), “risk taking” ($p \leq 0,001$). This may indicate that the ability to express emotions, corresponding with one’s leading interests, sincerely, timely and

understandable to others is associated with the general resource state that allows overcoming life difficulties and hardships successfully. Emotionally creative person more actively and with pleasure participates in finding solutions to subjectively significant problems; he/she sincerely convinced that the events that happens in his/her life contribute to his/her development due to knowledge extracted from life experience, and struggle and overcoming difficulties allow influence on the outcome of what is happening.

The scale “preparedness” of emotional creativity positively correlates with such hardiness scales as “control” ($p \leq 0,05$) and “risk taking” ($p \leq 0,05$). This may indicate that emotionally creative person in the course of life learns to use the previous emotional experience for managing his/her life in the present, but is not afraid of new life events. This may indicate the belief of a person that everything that happens with him/her in life helps to his/her emotional development due to the knowledge extracted from emotional experiences.

The basis of risk taking is the idea of development through the active acquiring of knowledge from emotional experience and their subsequent use. A new life event may be emotionally perceived by an individual as an original way of influence on his/her activity

The scale “control” of hardiness test positively correlates with the integrative indicator of emotional creativity ($p \leq 0,05$), which indicates the close relationship between the ability to rapidly generate new effective emotional reactions and the conviction that their own efforts and activity in difficult life situations is not only useless but also necessarily lead to the desired changes.

The scale “control” of hardiness test also positively correlates with the scale “effectiveness” ($p \leq 0,001$) of emotional creativity questionnaire. It confirms the fact of existence of relationship between the ability to generate new emotions and express them understandably for the people around with intrapersonal control over the difficult life situations and the belief in abilities and effectiveness of their own activities.

The mathematical analysis also showed the existence of relationship between the components of emotional creativity and subjective quality of life. The total index of the scale “effectiveness” of emotional creativity positively correlates with total index of the scale “subjective quality of life” ($p \leq 0,001$) (see Table 2). Effectiveness of experiencing and expressing feelings makes the state of happiness more accessible.

Table 2. Correlation of components of emotional creativity and subjective quality of life

	1 unit of value and semantic orientations	2 unit of goals and aspirations	3 unit of life satisfaction and happiness
authenticity	0,091735	0,257979	0,361051*
effectiveness	0,338418*	0,432517**	0,642581***
emotional creativity	0,076831	0,242025	0,308436*

Note: *** - $p \leq 0,001$; ** - $p \leq 0,01$; * - $p \leq 0,05$

The scale “effectiveness” of emotional creativity positively correlates with such aspects (units) of subjective quality of life as value and semantic orientations ($p \leq 0,05$); goals and aspirations ($p \leq 0,01$); life satisfaction and happiness ($p \leq 0,001$). The subject’s ability to express new and sincere emotional reaction, understandable to people around, helps to move effectively towards achievement of their goals, orienting in the hierarchy of values on personally significant aspects of life, and experiencing the feeling of fullness of being, joy, optimism and life satisfaction.

Table 3. Correlation of the scale “effectiveness” of emotional creativity with scales of subjective quality of life (SQoL)

	family	relationship with others	health and physical wellbeing	rest	career and professional success	material wellbeing	subjective “I”	Total index of subjective quality of life
Effectiveness	0,354*	0,408***	0,517***	0,446**	0,381**	0,544***	0,520***	0,558***

Note: *** - $p \leq 0,001$; ** - $p \leq 0,01$; * - $p \leq 0,05$

The scale “effectiveness” of emotional creativeness positively correlates with such scales of subjective quality of life as “family”, “relationship with others”, “health and physical wellbeing”, “recreation and leisure”, “career and professional success”, “material wellbeing”, “subjective I” (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

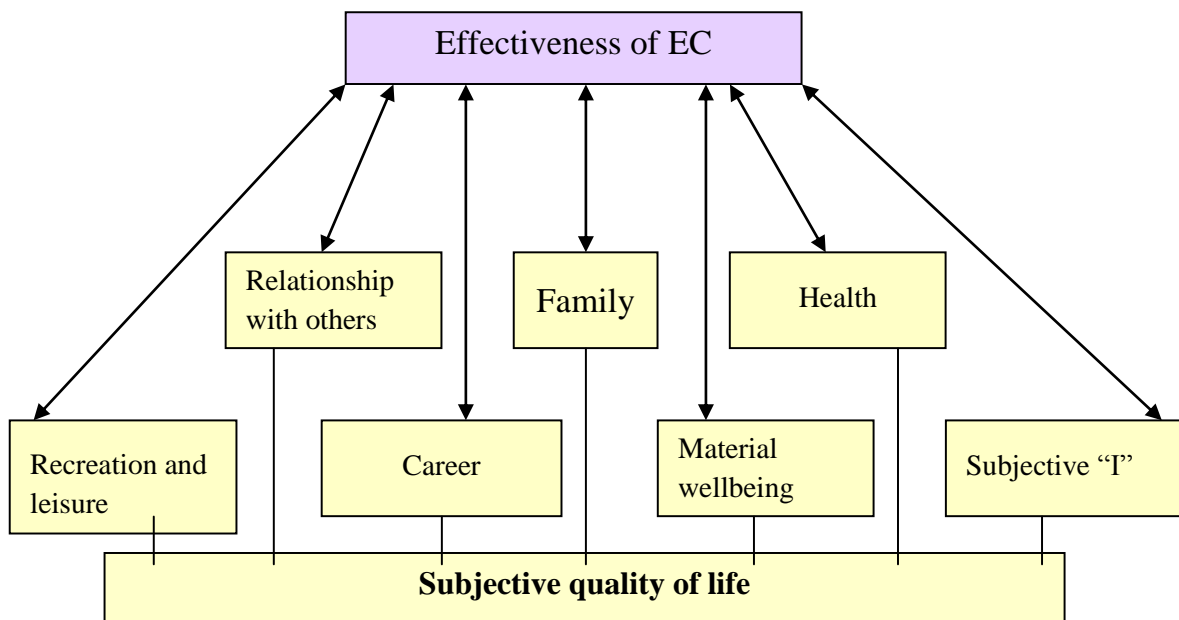


Figure 2. Correlation of effectiveness of emotional creativity (EC) and scales of subjective quality of life

Effective expression and understanding of emotions help to build relationship within the family; contributes to the striving to provide comfort, wellbeing and harmony in family relationships; allows to appreciate communication and establish new contacts in their lives, to strive to improve their physical wellbeing and use of spare time for a good rest; to use creative approach to professional activities, professional development and career; to strive to increase their material wellbeing and personal development.

Thus, the hypothesis of the first stage of our comprehensive study is confirmed: emotional creativity as ability to generate new, effective emotional syndromes is positively connected with hardiness and subjective quality of life.

The second stage of the research.

In the group of mothers we identified the following quantitative indicators of emotional creativity (Figure 3). Out of 100% of respondents 65% have the average level of emotional creativity, 15% - low level of emotional creativity and 20% - high level of emotional creativity.

It was found that *the index of emotional creativity is related with the presence of higher education*. Thus mothers with higher education show higher level of emotional creativity ($r = 0,3$; $p \leq 0,05$).

Next, we separately performed the analysis of groups of girls and boys. This analysis revealed significant differences in the level of assertiveness between boys and girls. The quantity of highly-assertive boys in the test group is 29%, and of girls – just 5% (Significant differences in Fisher criterion is ($\varphi *emp$) = 6.652). Moreover, highly-assertive boys have decreased anxiety.

In the process of research it was found that emotional creativity of mothers is differently interrelated with personal and emotional characteristics of teenagers depending on their gender. So, we found a direct interrelation between the level of emotional creativity of mothers and level of assertiveness of sons (figure 3)

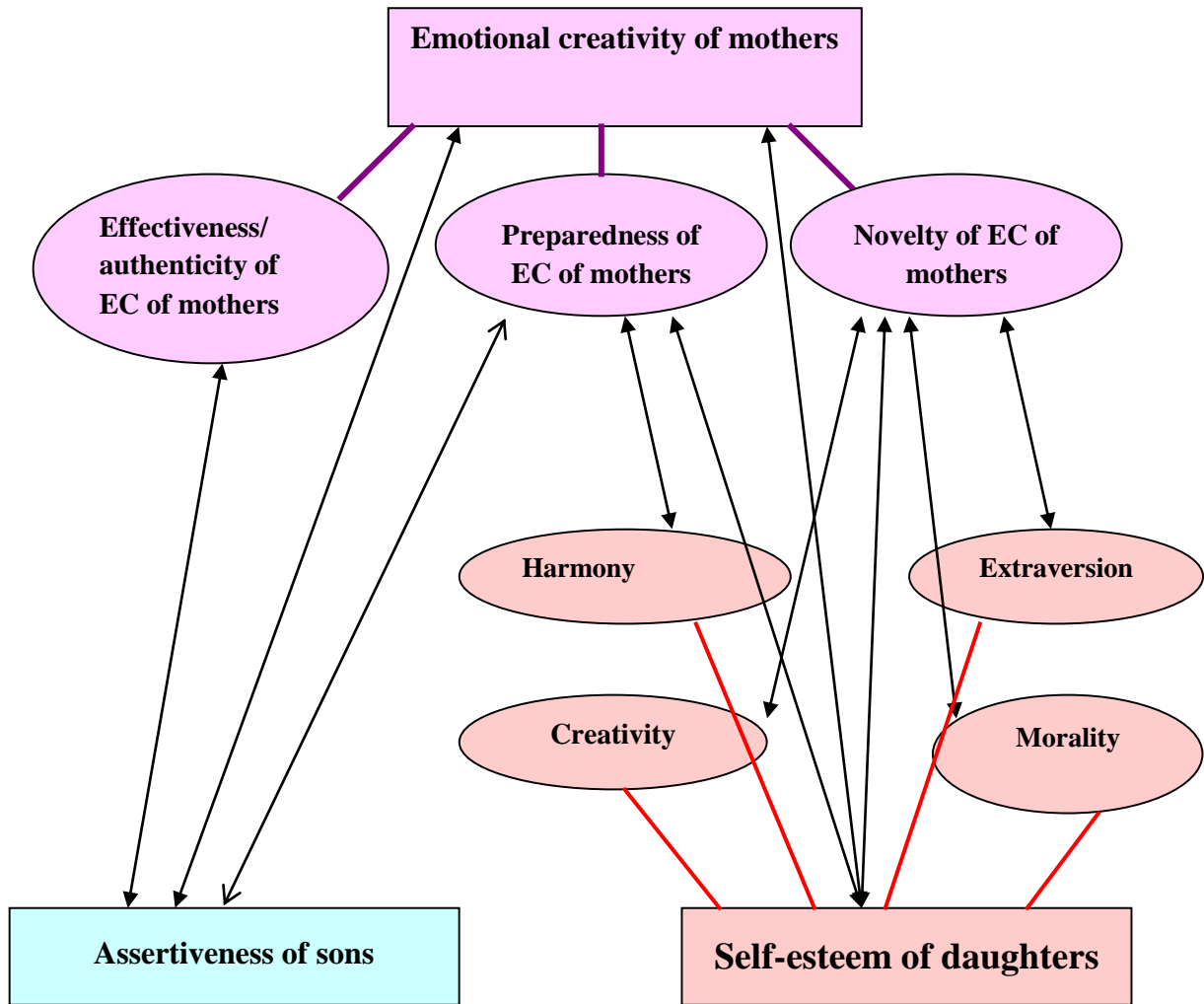


Figure 3. Correlation of components of emotional creativity (EC) of mothers with assertiveness and self-identity of teenagers

Teenage boys, whose mothers have high level of emotional creativity, are more likely to choose the assertive behaviour ($r = 0,5$; $p \leq 0,05$). Such boys are more prepared to defend their opinions and rights, and are more likely to resist external social environment. The range of variability of their behavior is much broader that of teenage boys, whose mothers react on what is happening stereotypically and limited.

The more detailed analysis of this interrelation revealed the connection of the level of assertiveness of teenage boys with such scales of mother's emotional creativity as "preparedness" – mother's ability to understand her own emotional experience and emotional experience of the other ($r = 0,4$; $p \leq 0,10$), and

“effectiveness/authenticity” – the ability to skillfully express her emotions ($r = 0,5$; $p \leq 0,05$).

The interconnection between the level of self-esteem of daughters and the level of emotional creativity of daughters ($r = 0,45$; $p \leq 0,05$). Teenage girls, whose mothers have high level of emotional creativity, estimate their personal qualities, skills and abilities higher (Figure 3).

The analysis of separate factors of self-esteem of a daughter and the components of emotional creativity of a mother revealed following results. With the component of mothers’ emotional creativity “novelty” – the ability to produce original emotional reactions – positively correlates factors of daughters’ self-esteem – “morality” ($r = 0,45$; $p \leq 0,05$), “creativity” ($r = 0,6$; $p \leq 0,01$), “extraversion” ($r = 0,45$; $p \leq 0,05$). With the component of mothers’ emotional creativity “preparedness” positively correlates the factor of daughters’ self-esteem “harmony” – acceptance of themselves and the outside world ($r = 0,6$; $p \leq 0,01$).

Conclusions

Emotional creativity as the way of generating new, effective emotional syndromes, is positively connected with hardiness and subjective quality of life. Psychological mechanisms of hardiness are closely tied with emotional regulation that has a special meaning in case of adaptation in unexpected and non-standard situations that require production of new, non-stereotyped forms of emotional reaction. Development of emotional creativity can be one of increase mechanisms of hardiness in difficult non-standard life situations that are beyond the scope of general life experience. Hardiness and emotional creativity can also be important components of general psychic system that is responsible for the ability to transform unfavourable circumstances.

A person, who attaches great importance to his /her emotions and can express his /her feelings, is subjectively more satisfied with his/her relationship with other

people, family relations, success at work, material situation, health conditions, quality of leisure and his/her subjective "I".

Emotional creativity has not only intrapersonal interconnections with other individual peculiarities, but interrelations with psychological peculiarities of self-attitude and relatives behaviour. In particular, there is an interconnection between the level of emotional creativity of a mother and personal and emotional characteristics of teenagers. Emotional creativity of mothers contributes to sons' more free development of assertiveness and daughters' more positive self-acceptance and formation of a sense of agreement with themselves and the outside world.

Results of the research can be used in development of trainings of hardiness and emotional creativity, and in psychological advising on the influence of parents' personal characteristics on teenagers' personal qualities.

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